

# SOCIAL ACTION NEWS-LETTER

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## Looking Back on the Election

With the election safely behind us and the nation turning its attention once more to other affairs, we venture some reflections on the campaign and its future meaning.

First. President Roosevelt undoubtedly has a clear mandate from the electorate to proceed with his program of international collaboration. This mandate was given without any very clear idea of what he, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Stalin are planning, but for better or for worse the people have given him the green light to proceed. Many of those who voted for him are not sure just which Roosevelt has been elected, for the President has demonstrated again and again that several personalities inhabit his frame. The Chicago speech led many of them to hope that it is the New Deal, progressive, internationalist Roosevelt that has been given the fourth term. At all events, the people, by a decisive popular majority and an overwhelming electoral college majority, preferred his leadership.

It may be, as Peter F. Drucker predicts in the October issue of *Harper's*, that Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin are planning to organize Europe separately from the rest of the world and to permit European nations to enter the world organization only as they demonstrate their capacity for self-government and peaceful living within the society of nations. If such is the program the outlook for world security through democratic processes is none too bright, but whatever the program it is in President Roosevelt's hands, so far as the American electorate is concerned.

In the second place, the election clearly demonstrates that isolationism is dead as a political issue. The defeat of men like Senator Nye of North Dakota, Representative Hamilton Fish of New York, and the retirement in the face of almost certain defeat of Senator Reynolds of North Carolina, Senator "Cotton Ed" Smith of South Carolina, and Representative Martin Dies of Texas, not to mention the defeat of other reactionaries in the primaries, is indicative that the American people, regardless of party affiliation, do not want the peace sabotaged this time by any "little group of Wilful Men," as it was in Woodrow Wilson's day. Governor Dewey made a desperate effort to keep clear of charges of isolationism, and in a great measure succeeded. But he was never able to escape the fact that many of the men of influence and power in his camp have isolationist records. No fair minded person will distrust the sincerity of Governor Dewey's statements on world cooperation, but the simple fact is that the electors were unwilling to trust some of the men who would have been powerful had he been elected. The people are for international cooperation and the simple fact is that they are prepared to sacrifice more for it than even President Roosevelt thinks they are.

In the third place, the election demonstrated the fact that the labor movement has become politically conscious and effective. While it is doubtful if the PAC would have been for Governor Dewey under any circumstances, it was unfortunate for him that he and

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## The Churches and the New World Order

No fact is more clearly discernible than that out of this war a new world order of some sort is emerging. What is not so clear is whether it is to be a better world—a world society of nations in which the peace and security of all peoples shall be the concern of all—or whether it is to be a continuation of the old system of alliances, with the powerful nations either grouped together to control or divided into competing power blocs to struggle for advantage.

In this decision the churches have a vital interest. Christians are concerned about the kingdom of God in eternity, but they are also concerned about the kingdom of God in time. The Communist jibe that Christianity promises "pie in the sky" is not only doggerel verse; it is doggerel theology. The Christian religion, rightly understood, has always been concerned with man's life both in time and in eternity, however much the contemporary aspects of its gospel may have been obscured at various times in history. And prominent among these concerns has always been the passionate desire for "peace on earth and goodwill among men."

The present situation challenges the churches at this very point. The average church member, like the average citizen, is remote from the processes by which these vital decisions are made. He is preoccupied with his job, his business and his family, and is inclined to leave these matters to his elected representatives, the President, the Senators and the Congressmen whom he has chosen to run the government. By tradition American churches have kept free from interference in matters of government, as they wish government to keep free from interference in matters of religion.

But there are limits to this duality of religion and government. Christianity is a totalitarian gospel. It seeks not to dominate every area of life, but to permeate every area of life with its message of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The churches do not seek to have their representatives sit at the peace table where they may impose their will upon the conference, but rather to see that the men and women who sit there are motivated by principles which are basically Christian. To this not even non-Christian delegates can reasonably object. And if the delegates are animated by genuinely Christian concerns, there will be included a concern for the welfare of our enemies as well as for our allies. It is well that labor groups throughout the world are beginning to lift their voices against proposals to German workers in virtual slavery in order to rebuild devastated areas when their presence is needed to strengthen the democratic forces within the new Germany.

Let us be clear then about how the churches can influence the peace. Not by sending a delegate or delegates to participate in the peace conference, but by creating in their own members and in their own communities an understanding of the problems involved in the peace and by seeking to apply to the solution of these problems the principles which are the essence of its gospel.

—James A. Crain

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### Churches of Christ Plan Support for COs

The Churches of Christ, that group of brethren opposed to the use of instrumental music in worship, have set up a committee to solicit funds for the support of their members who are conscientious objectors and have been assigned to Civilian Public Service. Soon after the passage of the Selective Service Act it became apparent that a considerable number of young men from these churches, taking their Bible teaching seriously, were refusing to do military service and in consequence were being classified as conscientious objectors. Due to the absence of any organized form of cooperation between congregations it was difficult to secure support for these men. As the number increased the problem became acute. On their own responsibility a group of persons in Los Angeles formed a committee to solicit funds to aid "those whose consciences both our government and we ourselves respect." In a letter addressed to all the churches the committee declares that it feels "it is neither fair nor right for us to expect others to support our brethren whose Bible study and whose teachings have led them to take the position they now hold."

Evidently these brethren are taking the matter seriously, as the committee reports that \$6,200 was received during the past year and that approximately \$400 per month is pledged for the support of these men. One church sent its check for \$500 and another a check for \$1,000.

In a forthright statement to the churches the committee states, "We believe that in spite of any argument that any may make, all of us feel a responsibility to our brethren who are in their present need. Whatever our personal convictions concerning the Christian's duty in time of war, we certainly feel that it is not right for other religious groups to bear the burden of both their young men and ours. . . . We believe that all of us will feel better, both now and after the war, if we have accepted the responsibility of visiting in their need the fine young brethren whose consciences have militated against participation in the armed service."

This statement is altogether laudable. Of what avail is it to boast of loyalty to Christ and the Bible if we refuse sympathy and support to those who act on the principles which we preach? Why preach peace and pray for the coming of peace if we refuse to stand by those who stand for peace when standing is costly? It is possible that in this matter the churches are being tested in the minds of the on-coming generation. How long can the church continue to compromise on the clear teachings of Christ and not forfeit the respect of clear-thinking men?

### Taking Youth in Hand?

President Roosevelt's cursory way of dealing with a year's government service for American youngsters at his last press conference is likely to create more bewilderment than enlightenment. He expressed hope that a government service bill would get through Congress this winter. But he made no attempt to answer a query as to whether the service would include girls. When asked if the training would be military, he said that depended on what is meant—would cooking or carpentry be military?

If the President was sending up a trial balloon to promote public discussion, well enough. What he said does not create the impression, however, that the administration has done much serious thinking on the subject of universal service, or that it has any plan as yet that the country would approve.

A preparedness plan will face obstacles which might become insuperable if an attempt were made to expand it into some kind of regimented national youth program, military only is some of its aspects. It may be assumed that the country favors a post-war military force as large as necessary to insure the national security, and is ready to accept the Marshall formula of a relatively small military establishment with a large citizens' reserve. Congress should intensify its studies along this line, taking into consideration the possibilities of state co-operation in maintaining armories and training grounds and accepting other responsibilities that would help keep costs within reason.

But there are definite limits to what can be done until such time as we know whether the world security organization is going to be an effective instrument in preventing aggression and relieving the world of some of its armament load. Strong advocates of universal military training favor early action because they fear the results of the reaction in public sentiment after the war. But as important as timing may be, opposition already is growing up to proceeding with permanent plans for a high degree of military preparedness that would ignore the existence of a world co-operative agency. Even so, training for military preparedness is a goal toward which Congress can work and have the sympathetic understanding of the public.

Apparently the President conceives of a gigantic training program under which the youth of the country would give a year of its life to the government. Skipping the question of its financing, such a program would be, according to one school, a sensational instrument for building up the strength of the nation. Under it health building, vocational instruction, disciplinary training and the indoctrination in "democracy" would be undertaken on a grand scale. But it is not a plan that the country would accept without a great deal of distrust and fears for the future. If the people and their communities have arrived at such a state of helplessness that only the federal government can see to it that youth takes body-building exercises, fixes its teeth, trains for a vocation and thinks along the right lines, then it is time to wonder what has happened to the strength-giving powers of the democracy, freedom and self-reliance that we have been praising so long. (New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, editorial November 20.)

The above editorial is quoted not in approval of all of its statements, but because it puts a finger on some of the issues involved in the current drive for enactment of peace-time conscription while the war is still on. It is perfectly clear that the proponents of conscription are not thinking of the present emergency, which is adequately cared for by the existing Selective Service

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## On Social Frontiers

On November 10, 1944 ninety-four cooperative farms in Georgia, set up by the Farm Security Administration as an experiment, were sold to tenant farmers in harmony with Congressional action requiring that these projects be liquidated. The property is valued at more than \$300,000 and comprises 13,000 acres. The purchasers, mainly tenants who operated the farms under the previous arrangement, will pay from \$3,000 to \$3,500 each for farms of from 100 to 200 acres, with payments extended over a 40-year period. Each farm unit has a neat white house and a barn.

The YMCA has recently published through Association Press, 347 Madison Avenue, New York, a 97-page booklet entitled, "Working With Organized Labor," which seeks to give guidance to local associations in reaching and interesting members of labor unions in the work of the YMCA. On the basis of a study made in 1942 the booklet concludes that the Association "is apparently weak in its contacts and public relations with union officials" and that there is reticence on the part of secretaries as a whole "in the matter of approaching a labor union with a view toward serving them through our program." The publication proposes ways whereby friendly cooperation between the YMCA and organized labor can be planned.

According to *Economic Outlook*, published by the CIO, of the 15 billion dollars worth of government-owned manufacturing plants built to speed war production, one-half is operated and controlled by 31 corporations, while four-fifths is operated and controlled by 150 companies. On the dollar invested basis, 12.5% is in plants valued at over \$100 million, 30% in plants valued at over \$50 million and only 4% in plants valued at less than \$1 million. One of the major questions which the American people will have to answer at the close of the war is the disposition of these plants. Shall they be retained by the government? If so, how shall they be operated? Shall they be sold to private industry? If so, to whom? And at what price? It is the business of the government to see that the American people retrieve as much of this \$15 billion dollar investment as possible in order to cut down the war debt. Past experience would suggest that those who now control these investments will expect to purchase them at a fraction of their value.

A study of executive salaries of 100 large corporations selected at random, made by the CIO Department of Research and Education, shows that the average salaries of the three top executives of each corporation increased from \$61,000 in 1939 to \$84,000 in 1942. The study also showed that many firms conceal salary increases to executives by giving them options to purchase company stock at figures below the market price. For instance, *Business Week*, in its July 22 issue, reports that Willys-Overland, as a part of the agreement that brought Charles E. Sorenson from the Ford organization to the presidency of the corporation, gave Mr. Sorenson an option on 100,000 shares of stock at \$3 a share, to be purchased in annual amounts of 22,500 shares. Since the market value of the stock is \$20 per share, Mr. Sorenson will profit to the extent of \$382,500 per year. When his stock has all been purchased he will have a \$2 million-dollar interest in the company at a cost to himself of \$300,000.

Labor may be justified in feeling that if industry can do so well for its top executives it could also lift the ceiling on wages if it is so disposed.

## Draft Rejections Linked to Low Wage Scales

Low wage scales prevalent in the South and the consequent low standards of living for workers is blamed for the fact that draft rejections for physical unfitness in these states are the highest in the nation, according to a report made to the Senate labor committee by Philip Murray, president of the CIO on November 20th. The report was based on draft rejection figures compiled by Colonel Leonard G. Rowntree, medical division director of Selective Service. The Senate labor committee is considering a proposal of Senator Pepper, of Florida, for congressional approval of a 65c minimum wage scale. The figures submitted by Mr. Murray were based on 1940 incomes and 1943 draft rejections. The following conditions prevailed:

North Carolina—Draft rejections 56.8 per 100 registrants. (Highest in the nation) Per capita income \$316 annually, 43rd in the nation.
Arkansas—Rejection rate 55.9. Annual per capita income \$246, second lowest in the nation.
South Carolina—Rejection rate 54.7 (third highest). Annual per capita income \$286, fourth lowest.
Florida—Rejection rate 53.2 (fourth highest). Annual per capita income \$471, 30th in the nation.
Louisiana—Rejection rate 52.6 (fifth highest). Annual per capita income \$357, 39th in the nation.
Virginia—Rejection rate 52.2 (sixth highest). Annual per capita income \$450, 31st in the nation.
Georgia—Rejection rate 51.6 (seventh highest). Annual per capita income \$315, sixth lowest.
Alabama—Rejection rate 49 (eighth highest). Annual per capita income \$268, third lowest.
Mississippi—Rejection rate 45 (12th highest). Annual per capita income \$202, lowest in nation.
Tennessee—Rejection rate 44.7 (13th highest). Annual per capita income \$317, 42nd in the nation.

There are many additional factors which sociologists would want considered before reaching final conclusions concerning the relation of draft rejections to low incomes, among them a study of the economic levels in each state from which the rejectees come. In all these states there are varying levels of economic security. Should it be shown that draft rejections from low wage groups consistently run higher than in higher income groups it would go far to establish Mr. Murray's contention. Other factors which might affect the result are public health provisions in the various states, the relative proportions of urban and rural population and the educational and cultural levels of the various income groups. Another factor of considerable importance is the fact that draft rejections are based on 1943 figures, while incomes are for 1940. Wages and farm incomes have advanced considerably in the intervening three years, especially for certain groups. On the other hand, increased income could scarcely have affected general health conditions in so short a time.

When all factors are taken into consideration and due allowances made for them, it still remains clear that low incomes do affect the health and well-being of peoples. President Roosevelt is urging a year of compulsory military training as a solution for the problem. Perhaps a better solution would be to aid low income groups to a higher level of economic security. Most of the states listed above are "poll tax states" in which a large percentage of the voters are excluded from the polls. All of them are states in which Negroes are either excluded from the ballot or exercise their citizenship rights only in the face of public disapproval. The economic status of share-croppers and tenents in these areas is notoriously below the level of minimum health requirements.

## Taking Youth in Hand? (Con't. from P. 2)

Act, but of the future. They fear that the American people, if left to think the matter through, will not approve universal military conscription in peace-time. So they want to "put it over" while the public mind is engrossed in the war. In the second place, they evidently have no faith in the proposed world organization. Does the President have so little faith in his own international planning that he is unwilling to trust it? Or does he propose that the U. S., Britain and the U. S. S. R. shall enforce their will on the rest of the world? Another question which seems undecided is whether the President wants universal *military* conscription or merely conscription of the youth of the nation—perhaps the girls as well as the boys—for a year of national service. This was one of Hitler's most effective devices for controlling Germany. Do we now want to try it? A fourth unanswered question is, Do we want a further extension of federal power—this time into the home, taking over certain functions that have from the beginning of time belonged to the family? A system of federal training, whether military or other, would involve "indoctrination," which is only another way of saying "regimented thinking." Any plan that gives to the federal government a year of the life of the nation's youth, makes it responsible for their health, vocational training, disciplinary training and indoctrination in democracy is the longest step toward regimentation that the American people have ever taken. The proponents of this measure should make up their minds what they want and then tell the people what they are planning. Until then we shall do well to insist that legislation be deferred till the war is over.

## Japanese May Return, Says Governor

Japanese evacuated from California are free to re-enter that state as soon as the federal government determines that military necessity no longer requires their exclusion, says Gov. Warren. Under such conditions returning Japanese will be given "full recognition of their constitutional and statutory rights."

"The evacuation of the Japanese from this area and permission for their return here during the war," said Governor Warren, "have been and are matters wholly within the jurisdiction of the United States Army in the exercise of war powers delegated to the Army by the President of the United States."

## Martial Law Lifted from Hawaii

On October 24 the President lifted martial law from Hawaii and restored the right of habeas corpus. Thus came to an end almost three years of military rule. Under the proclamation the military commander has authority to establish blackouts and curfew periods, organize air raid precautions, regulate the conduct of enemy aliens, take anti-espionage precautions in the military area, control possession and use of weapons, oversee port and harbor protection, regulate travel and regulate foreign language or dual-language publications.

This action of the President is heartening news to Americans, both as evidence of the passing of danger from the Hawaiian area and as assurance that the democratic liberties of the people will be restored as quickly as military necessity will permit. While not a single case of sabotage by persons of Japanese ancestry in Hawaii has been authenticated, the islands were for many months following Pearl Harbor a vulnerable point of possible enemy attack. Martial law was justified and would have been invoked by any nation in the world under similar circumstances.

## Looking Back on the Election (From P. 1)

his campaign managers and speakers took a course that drove them into the Roosevelt camp. To raise the cry of Communism against labor simply because it was exercising the right to participate in politics was not only bad strategy, but unfair tactics. Sidney Hillman is not only *not* a Communist, but he is the man who effectively cleaned the Communists out of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union. The support of Earl Browder no more made Mr. Roosevelt the candidate of the Communists than did the support of Gerald L. K. Smith make Governor Dewey the candidate of the "America First-ers." If the Republican Party continues its present attitude toward organized labor it must resign itself to seeing several million labor voters driven into the arms of the Democrats. Poor strategy of this sort at the close of the Civil War, drove "the Solid South" into permanent alliance with the Democratic Party. We don't want alabor bloc in this country that is owned by any particular political party.

The campaign was conducted on a low level of ethics and sportsmanship. Of the two party platforms, that of the Republicans was the more forthright and explicit. The Democratic platform was a mere jumble of words without much sense or meaning. It offered no program other than the President's record. Mr. Roosevelt's speech to the Teamsters Union was a performance about on the level of Hinky Dink or Bath House John in a Chicago aldermanic race. His personal reference to himself as a Christian in his Boston speech was not, in view of some of his previous speeches, in very good taste. It was not until the Chicago speech that the President hit the level of dignity of the high office for which he was campaigning. Here he asserted again the New Deal and could his supporters be sure that this is the course his fourth term will take they could feel more confident of the future.

Governor Dewey, on the other hand, started off well. His speech of acceptance at Chicago was impressive. Here was a radio personality almost as good as that of the President's. His first speeches attracted attention. His Pacific coast trip was a great success. Then he fell into a trap. Some say that Mr. Roosevelt's address to the Teamster's Union was carefully planned to sting Mr. Dewey and arouse him to anger. Whether this is true or not, the fact is that in his Oklahoma City speech Mr. Dewey forsook the high plane on which he had been campaigning and went after the President. From thence onward he became the bitter prosecutor. His speeches deteriorated in quality and his influence on the voters waned. And when Mrs. Clare Booth Luce characterized the President as a liar without rebuke from Governor Dewey she lost prestige for them both.

There were certain other important highlights in the campaign. The anti-Roosevelt Democrats proved to be a group of leaders without followers. Once more election returns show how pitifully few electors have anything to say about government in poll tax states. Some progress was made in the battle to extend the right of the ballot to Negro citizens, but much remains to be done before they can feel that it is a free ballot. How much longer can states claim representation in Congress and in the electoral college for citizens who are deprived of the right of franchise?

Mr. Roosevelt is President for another four years. And for two of those years he is assured a working majority in Congress. In all probability he and the present Congress will have to face problems in the making of peace and bringing about the transition from war to a post-war economy. Every good citizen will pray that they will be guided by Divine wisdom in their efforts to meet their heavy responsibilities.